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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0089
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 0001
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0072
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA 0011
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0014

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 001103

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IAEA](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [KV](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR OPPOSES IRAN/SYRIA IAEA CANDIDACIES;
CONCERNED OVER RUSSIA

REF: A. STATE 99745
[1](#)B. SAN SALVADOR 1040 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Robert I. Blau, CDA, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: El Salvador supports our efforts to prevent Iran and Syria from winning a seat on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, but its voting rights in that agency remain suspended because its dues are in arrears. The Salvadorans raised concerns about Russia's growing regional interests and continue to consider recognizing Kosovo's independence. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In response to Ref (A) demarche, acting MFA Director General for Foreign Policy Nelson Amaya told PolCouns September 22 that Iran and Syria are among those countries El Salvador always opposes for candidacies of consequence, e.g., on the UN Human Rights Council. However, Amaya noted that while El Salvador could provide moral support for our pursuit of Afghanistan's candidacy, it will not vote in the IAEA General Conference since its voting rights remain suspended because its dues are in arrears. Amaya said the Salvadoran Ministry of Finance was habitually tight-fisted in paying dues to international organizations, applying a cost-benefit analysis that focused primarily on costs. He said the IAEA has suggested El Salvador's voting rights could be restored with a partial payment of its arrears, but Amaya said the issue is unlikely to be resolved before the IAEA General Conference.

[1](#)3. (C) Amaya then raised Salvadoran concern with Russia's growing interest in cooperation with Bolivia (on counter-narcotics) and Venezuela (recent aviation exercises.) He said the GOES was concerned this could be destabilizing for the region and noted the parallel with Russia's invasion of (and continued presence in) Georgia and Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. PolCouns noted NATO's efforts to signal to Russia that until the August 12 ceasefire agreement is respected, there can be no "business as usual." Amaya said El Salvador similarly favored a slowing in efforts to strengthen Central American ties with Russia (including those in SICA, the Central American Integration System), but that Nicaragua made regional consensus on Russia policy difficult. Bilaterally, he said, efforts to strengthen ties are on hold, though the GOES still has long-term hopes of improving bilateral and regional ties with Moscow. He then raised Kosovo independence, recalling San Salvador's desire not to be among the first to recognize Pristina, in an attempt to avoid inserting itself into a distant conflict. Some forty countries have recognized Pristina, he said, and El Salvador is still considering when it will recognize Kosovo's independence.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: The GOES views Moscow's regional interest with concern, especially given the company it has chosen to

keep in the region. Amaya was careful not to suggest that Salvadoran recognition of Kosovo was imminent, but did make clear the issue is still under consideration, and is being influenced by concerns over Russia's actions in Georgia and in Latin America.

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